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SE 105

TELCON  
Scott Reston/Kissinger  
2/28/75 - 11:50 a.m.

RELEASED IN FULL

K: Hello.

R: Hello Henry.

K: Scotty, how are you?

R: Alright. Sorry I missed you the other night. I thank you for...

K: Well we loved having your wife there and I'm very fond of Dick.

R: Well, he can run through a hard time and \_\_\_\_\_.

K: He's a very honorable man.

R: Yes, he's a fine young guy. I'm trying to think through this next trip. You're going off on Wednesday, aren't you?

K: Wednesday, yes.

R: I'm trying to put it in some kind of perspective of the long struggle. How do you see it? What's the nut question here?

K: Well the nut question is really it will determine the mood, the philosophy and the framework of the final settlement. There has been a lot of discussion whether this would be an alternative. That isn't the issue, the issue is whether we can get the Soviets to come along in a moderate approach. I think if we succeed we have a fair chance. Because that will be the only approach that's ever worked. And it's also the way we can get into Geneva under the best possible conditions. I really think it's the future of moderation in the Arab world will depend importantly on whether I succeed.

R: And how do you estimate that and who are the key figures?

K: Well the chance of the negotiation as such, I don't want to sound like Eliot Richardson putting odds on contingencies, but I think the negotiation itself is slightly better than 50-50 between Egypt and Israel. Then the problem is, you know if we could also move on the Syrian front then the odds would be pretty good. But since this may be difficult the odds are a little more complicated.

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- R: The odds are against on the Syrian front?
- K: The odds are against on the Syrian front in the same timeframe as on the Egyptian front. Not permanently.
- R: The Israeli front, you think....
- K: Looks better in the leadership and totally uncertain in the Cabinet and Parliament. But with them it is a very grave event with the Jewish community doesn't always understand because if it fails some members of the American Jewish community think if it fails there will be a massive crisis in Geneva with Europe, Japan, Russia and the Arabs all uniting to better rapid progress.
- R: You can have a real smash-up unless you go there with a real vacious for settlement....
- K: And with the <sup>moderate</sup> ~~moderate~~ Arabs having achieved something.
- R: Has <sup>Sadat</sup> ~~that~~ got the influence really to bring the rest of them along or not?
- K: That's the \$64.00 question. I don't think he knows the answer.
- You write all of this on your own.
- R: Oh sure, I just want a little guidance as to what is the sensible position to take at this particular moment.
- K: But anything you can say to the Israelis about going to the American Jewish community that this is a grave matter along the lines of your previous....
- R: Yeah.
- K: Cause it really is for them.
- R: Of course it is. They're really up against it. What I don't understand, however, is, taking the other side of it for a moment, ~~what~~ why would they be satisfied to leave the passes and the oil field? If the only thing they get out of it is some vague ...
- K: They'll get more out of it.

- R: They've got to have something in writing, don't they?
- K: Oh yeah, they'll get something in writing.
- R: What does that amount to? What \_\_\_\_\_ do we want? What would....
- K: Well, I can't go into that, Scotty, but I think in that direction we made progress on the last trip. What is in writing will not be as important as the intangibles. But it will be significant. But the difficulty is to make people understand that what we are negotiating about now is the process and not a condition. But there will be a document, they're not being asked to withdraw unconditionally.
- R: Well that can only go back to the rating of 214338, can't it?
- K: That will certainly be part of it.
- R: ... and internationally guaranteed borders. Have we resolved the guarantee problem within our own government?
- K: No, but we're thinking about it very hard.
- R: How is the situation on the Hill. Has that calmed down a bit?
- K: It calmed down but it's very weird, Scotty, because I think that you can have a superb dialogue right now and not know what it means. In the old days you could talk to Russell and BDirksen and Benners, and they could tell you exactly what would happen. Now you take Turkish aid -- I have the impression that in a secret ballot, 5 out of 6 would vote for removing the cut-off. In fact, I've yet to meet a Congressional group other than those who sponsored it, bthat isn't highly uneasy about it, but there's nobody who you can really talk to who can get it from here to there.
- R: Yeah, we're fresh out of Sam Rayburns and Lyndon Johnsons.
- K: That's right. And it's especially difficult in the House.
- R: It's this democracy, you see.
- K: But Scotty, if you look at, over the years, one would have to say that the odds of this leading to executive predominance are very high, cause right now you have a Congress that's a little bit out of control, and the non-elected President. But you get yourself a President who has just wbeen elected against a Congress where the leaders have structured totally \_\_\_\_\_ and the odds would have to be with the President.

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- R: Oh, sure. Well, from what I read the immediate thing is it's going to go back this way anyway and with all the distractions and ambiguities of the questions before us, it's just hard to get a pilemont of any kind really, to get a lead.
- K: And to get a lead to act consecutively.
- R: Well, maybe in the parliamentary system where you got the whip and the government goes down maybe you could do it, but you can't do it under our system.
- K: No. If it really keeps going like this it will be more like the Third and Fourth Republic.
- R: I see Mr. Roth has retired you.
- K: Who?
- R: Tom Roth, of the Sun Times.
- K: Has retired me?
- R: Yeah, he's got you resigning.
- K: Oh, gee, I just wish I could go on a trip once with a little permanence.
- R: Well, as a matter of fact, I think that is one of the points that ought to be made -- get off this guy's back, at least during this session.
- K: Scotty, I have talked more seriously to you about this subject than to anyone else and you know my views and they haven't changed since you and I have had lunch, and there's nothing current on this.
- R: Well there better hadn't been cause our country needs you.
- K: Thank you.
- R: Well, good luck. I won't see you before you go. How long do you think you'll be away?
- K: I have no idea. It could be up to three weeks.
- R: Is your gal going with you?
- K: Yes.
- R: Good. Thank you, Henry. All the best.
- K: Nice to talk to you. Bye.

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